WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Raising funds for projects of NHAI

281. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the next phase 90 projects of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) requires $ 3-4 billion in the next two-three years: and

(b) if so, the steps Government is taking to raise funds for the execution of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) National Highways Authority of India has prepared Work plan for 2009-10 which envisages award of 122 projects of total length 11,947 km at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,00,000 crore. Under the financing plan for National Highways Development Programme (NHDP) recommended by the B.K. Chaturvedi Committee, NHAI would require borrowings of about Rs. 1,90,000 crore which may be raised through Capital Gain Tax Exemption Bonds, Tax free Bonds with 10 years maturity, Loans from insurance companies, Infrastructure Bonds, Loans from Multilateral Agencies (World Bank and Asian Development Bank), Market Borrowing (with Government Guarantee) and Loans from Domestic Financial Institutions (Bank).

Security implication of visa-on-arrival

*287. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has assessed the national security implications arising out of grant of highly disproportionate number of visa-on-arrival by Indian Immigration authorities in recent months;

(b) whether unlike Thailand or Indonesia, where temporary landing facility to foreign tourists are granted only upon emergent situations like death or illness in the family, India's immigration rules permits visa-on-arrival; and

(c) whether such laxity on the part of Indian immigration officials in the guise of tourism-friendly visa procedure, is posing a threat to national security?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) It has been decided to introduce Visa-on-Arrival scheme for tourists from five countries *viz.* Singapore, Finland, New Zealand, Luxembourg and Japan on a pilot basis for a period of one year. The guidelines for the implementation of the scheme are to be notified shortly. At present, Temporary Landing Facility (TLF) up to a maximum period of 15 days is provided to a foreigner who arrives in India without a Visa in an emergent situation like death/serious illness in the family. In addition, Government had in August, 2003 made a provision for issuing Collective Landing Permits (CLPs) to foreign tourists in groups of 4 or more sponsored by recognised/approved Indian travel agencies and

arriving by air or sea. CLPs are granted on a written request from the travel agencies to the Immigration Officers with full personal and passport details of the group members, itinerary; and an assurance that no individual would be allowed to drop out from the group at any place. Due procedure is followed by the immigration authorities before granting Temporary Landing Facility or Collective Landing Permits.

(c) No instance of national security having been compromised due to issuance of Temporary Landing Facility or Collective Landing Permits to bonafide tourists has been reported.

Political indulgence in defence procurements

*288. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Vice-Chief of Indian Air Force (IAF) has recently stated that politics over defence purchases impinged 'very badly' on the country's military requirements;

(b) if so, to what extent statement made by IAF Vice-Chief is factually correct;

(c) whether Government proposes to take steps to avoid political indulgence in defence procurements/modernization; and

(d) if so, the further reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) Defence acquisitions are made to meet the requirements of Armed Forces in accordance with the provisions of the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) without any political consideration. The procedure envisages a timeframe of two to three years for procurement of major weapon platforms and systems. Given the need to streamline the procedure in the light of experience gained during its implementation and to expedite the defence procurements, the DPP is periodically revised. The DPP incorporates a number of provisions to ensure transparency and accountability in the procurement process.

The Vice Chief of Air Staff had expressed his personal view during his talk at a seminar while referring to the delays that had occurred in the past in procurement of aircraft and systems.

Financial status of cotton corporation of India

*289. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the financial status of Cotton Corporation of India; and

(b) the financial allocations made and spent by the Corporation, State-wise, especially in Andhra Pradesh, which are running in losses?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) The Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI) is wholly owned undertaking of the Government of India. The Authorized Share capital is Rs. 75.00 crores and Paid up Share capital is Rs. 25.00 crores. The Corporation